



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Mara Dixon
President

November 30, 1998

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

I am writing this letter to you as a constituent of yours and an owner of a travel agency.

The recent decision of major U.S. airlines to cap commissions at \$100 on international airfares is just one more step in the airlines all-out assault to drive the travel agent from the marketplace. By forcing us from the marketplace, consumers will have no choice but to deal with the airlines directly through 800 numbers and the Internet. This will ultimately result in the consumer paying more money for their airline tickets. This fact was recently confirmed in the "20/20" television program which clearly illustrated that when you removed the travel agency from the scene, the airlines can over-charge the consumer at will.

I am deeply concerned about what the airlines are doing to force the traveling public to deal directly with them through 800 numbers and the Internet. The airlines do not want the public to have sources of unbiased information on airfares readily available to them. We, the travel agents, are the only ones who provide the consumer with complete and unbiased comparative fare and schedule information today.

The airlines' new commission policy simply fuels the fires of concern about the lack of airline competition in today's marketplace with its' fortress hub system and controls over the computer reservations systems. Please write the Secretary of Transportation and the Attorney General asking them to take the necessary steps to prevent these monopolistic practices of airlines from harming the travel consumer.

Sincerely,

Mara Dixon

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cc/Janet Reno and Rodney Slater